AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph [0001] on page 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0001]   This application is a continuation-in-part of pending application Serial No. 10/350,298 filed January 22, 2003 which application claims the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/354,760, filed February 4, 2002, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/377,902, filed May 2, 2002, both all of which applications are incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace paragraph [0031] on page 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0031]   **Fig. 8A.** Deduced amino acid sequence alignment and phylogenetic comparison of chloroplast sulfate permease genes from a variety of organisms. Deduced amino acid sequence alignment of sulfate permeases from *N. olivacea* (SEQ ID NO:10), *M. viride* (SEQ ID NO:11), *C. reinhardtii* (SEQ ID NO:12) and *C. vulgaris* (SEQ ID NO:13) (green algae), *Synechococcus sp. PCC 7942*(SEQ ID NO:14) (cyanobacterium), *M. polymorpha* (SEQ ID NO:15) (liverwort), and *B. halodurans* (SEQ ID NO:16) (a non-photosynthetic prokaryote). The alignment of the amino acid sequences was based on a ClustalW analysis.